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# Westmoreland Calls CBS Show 'Humiliating'

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NEW YORK, Nov. 20—Retired general William C. Westmoreland said today that watching the 1982 CBS documentary that is the subject of his \$120 million libel action was a "humiliating experience" that drew "disillusionment" and "bewilderment" from his friends and his children.

"They expressed concern, disillusionment. They were astonished," the general said of about 50 friends who called him. "They didn't know whether to believe it or not."

In the weeks after the broadcast, Westmoreland said he recalled receiving in the mail a cartoon, editorials and "numerous" letters attacking him for his actions as commander of U.S. ground forces in South Vietnam from 1964 to 1968.

"Most of them made me so angry, I instinctively tore them up and threw them in the wastebasket," he said in response to questions from his lawyer, Dan M. Burt.

Burt then read comments from a Houston woman who wrote: "If anyone deserved to be stripped of their 'so-called honors,' it is you . . . After seeing that show on TV, I hope the American people will never give you another moment's peace."

As Burt read the letter, Westmoreland's face grew slightly red and his jaw seemed to tighten.

A few moments later, Burt asked the general about a newspaper cartoon from the Valley Morning Star in Harlingen, Tex., which showed Westmoreland with a smoking machine gun and standing over three

bodies labeled "duty," "honor" and "country," a reference to the three words on a West Point graduate's ring.

"Did I look at it?" Westmoreland repeated his lawyer's question indignantly. "I most certainly did . . . It was a most humiliating experience."

From her seat in the third row of the courtroom audience, his wife, Katherine, looked shaken and then began to weep silently as he recounted his reactions to the broadcast.

At a recess a few moments later, Westmoreland walked into the courtroom instead of retiring to the witness area. He took his wife's arm and helped her outside to compose herself. A few minutes later, his wife was back in her seat for the beginning of Westmoreland's cross-examination by CBS lawyer David Boies.

The CBS Reports documentary at issue in this trial—"The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception"—charged that Westmoreland was part of a conspiracy at the highest levels of the military to keep a ceiling on enemy troop estimates in order to maintain support for the war in 1967.

As Burt ended four days of direct examination of Westmoreland, he asked:

"While you were in uniform did you ever lie to one of your superior officers?"

"Never," Westmoreland shot back loudly.

As Boies began his cross-examination, Westmoreland seemed to

support one section of the CBS program that depicted an April 1967 meeting with President Lyndon B. Johnson.

According to the documentary, Westmoreland at that meeting "had mostly good news to offer his commander in chief." As narrator Mike Wallace put it in the show:

"The Vietcong's army, he said, had leveled off at 285,000 men. And best of all, he told the president, the long-awaited crossover point had been reached. We were now killing or capturing Vietcong at a rate faster than they could be put back on the field."

Although previous testimony by former presidential aide Walt W. Rostow portrayed the meeting differently, Westmoreland did not deny the CBS version of this event.

CBS officials say that portion of

the broadcast was based on notes written at the time by the late John McNaughton, assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs during the period covered in the broadcast.

On the stand, Westmoreland said that his intelligence chief in South Vietnam, retired major general Joseph McChristian, had told him that enemy troop strength had leveled off at 285,000 and that the "crossover point" had been reached in all but two northern provinces.

He said the situation was "temporary" and could be changed when the North Vietnamese decided to send troops over the border.

"It was the best estimate my intelligence people had . . . and he understood that," Westmoreland recalled, referring to Johnson.

Pressed by Boies on whether he was ever told about a February meeting in Honolulu on the official enemy estimates, Westmoreland at first said he did not recall any briefing on the session at which some intelligence officials called for higher figures for "irregular" enemy troops.

When Boies asked about his earlier testimony that he was "cognizant" of the Honolulu meeting, Westmoreland, showing a touch of irritation, said he did not recall.

"I suggest to you that you, sir, that following this conference, Gen. McChristian, your intelligence chief, told you that at this conference the entire intelligence community [agreed that the numbers for irregular and political forces should be counted officially], is that not so?" Boies asked, trying to bear down on the witness.

"I don't recall what Gen. McChristian told me," Westmoreland replied.

*Special correspondent John Kennedy contributed to this report.*